

## Claims

Sub #2

1. In a data communication system including infrastructure arranged to communicate with a plurality of terminals over a channel, a method of adaptable channel access practiced at a terminal including the steps of:
- 5 determining an access priority value,  
ascertaining, responsive to said access priority value, when the channel is available, and
- 10 executing, responsive to said step of ascertaining, a channel access attempt.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an access priority value further includes the steps of:  
receiving a message to provide access information, and  
deriving, responsive to said access information, said access  
5 priority value.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein said step of receiving a message further provides said access information corresponding to a number of terminals registered for service.  
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4. The method of claim 2 wherein said step of receiving a message further provides said access information corresponding to a channel loading factor.
- 15 5. The method of claim 2 wherein said step of receiving a message further provides said access information corresponding to a system management parameter.
- Sub A3 → 6. The method of claim 5 wherein said step of receiving a message  
20 further provides said system management parameter corresponding to a channel priority level.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an access priority value further includes a step of deriving said access  
25 priority value in accordance with a number of channel access attempts.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an access priority value further includes a step of deriving said access priority value in accordance with a terminal priority.
- 30 Sub A4 → 9. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an  
access priority value further includes a step of deriving said access  
priority value in accordance with a change in channel priority.
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10. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an access priority value further includes a step of deriving said access priority value in accordance with a user selected priority access level.
- 5 11. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of ascertaining further includes a step of receiving an indicator corresponding to the channel availability.
- 10 12. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of ascertaining when said channel is available further includes;  
a step of checking to see if said channel is busy; if so waiting a random time that corresponds to said access priority value; and then rechecking whether said channel is busy.